

CITY AUDITOR'S OFFICE



AUDIT OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

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AUDIT OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

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BACKGROUND

Parks and Open Spaces, a division of the department of Field Operations maintains:

- 51 city parks with over 778 acres
- Over 60 city facility grounds including 195 acres
- Over 425 acres of medians
- 26 Clark County School District sites including approximately 85 acres

Parks and Open Spaces has 111 budgeted positions, including ten administrative staff. The remaining staff are irrigation, maintenance, and trade professionals (plumbers, painters, concrete mason, welder). In addition to its maintenance responsibilities, Parks and Open Spaces supports Leisure Services in cleaning reserved park sites and preparing parks for special events. Parks and Open Spaces has an operating budget for fiscal year 2003 of approximately \$11.85 million.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of our audit was to review the efficiency and effectiveness of operations of the division of Parks and Open Spaces.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Our fieldwork was performed in accordance with generally accepted governmental auditing standards. Procedures included:

- Interviewing personnel;
- Observing operations and activities;
- Reviewing records, reports, and other applicable documentation; and
- Discussions and correspondence with other municipalities.

While the focus of our audit was on Parks and Open Spaces, during the course of our audit issues relating to city parks and other city departments were identified and reported on within this report.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Auditor's Office appreciates the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by Parks and Open Spaces employees during the audit. Our audit identified issues management should address to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. These issues are summarized

in the following sections. While other issues were identified and discussed with management, they were deemed less significant for reporting purposes.

1. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Criteria:

- Established standard operating procedures help encourage adherence to policies and consistency in practice.

Condition:

- While Parks and Open Spaces has a policy and procedure manual, it primarily covers administrative, personnel, and safety policies.
- Procedures specific to the division's daily operations have not been formalized.
- New employees typically learn how to perform their duties through on-the-job training from experienced staff.

Cause:

- Standard operating procedures are not formally documented.

Effect:

- Potential for misunderstandings regarding operating procedures.
- Inconsistent practices.

Recommendation:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should create a divisional standard operations manual. This manual should be made accessible to employees and updated as needed. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of the following items:
 - Daily park cleaning and maintenance tasks
 - Preventative maintenance guidelines and timetables
 - Park inspection checklists
 - Irrigation schedules
 - Equipment and supplies purchasing guidelines
 - Equipment operating and cleaning procedures
 - Equipment and supplies security and storage guidelines
 - Vandalism reporting guidelines
 - Handling of customer complaints
 - Key contacts and phone numbers

2. PARK SECURITY

Criteria:

- Parks should be secure areas for public use.
- Park rules and regulations should be strictly enforced.
- Security measures should be visible to prevent damage to city property.

Condition:

- The City Marshal's Office has oversight over the security of city parks. In addition to patrolling the parks, the officers lock up park gates and restrooms every night.
- Each shift there is typically a sergeant and six officers working with only three to four officers available for patrol of areas outside of the downtown area. When on patrol, patrolling of parks is only one of their many responsibilities.
- The City Marshal's Office does not provide 24 hour, 7 days per week patrol of city parks. However, two deputy city marshals are on-call and METRO can be called during off hours.
- In the November 19, 2001 Department of Leisure Services Community Needs Assessment, 72% of the 601 people surveyed rated, *"Increase Park Police Visibility"* as a "High Priority".



Graffiti at a City Park

- Parks and Open Spaces employees respond to an average of 2-3 graffiti incidents per city park per week.
- Parks and Open Spaces employees spent over 2,351 hours between January 2001 and April 2002 (approximately 147 hours per month) handling park graffiti removals.
- Parks and Open Spaces has a full-time painter who spends approximately 90% of his time removing graffiti from city parks. Two other full-time painters spend approximately 10 to 15 percent of their time removing graffiti from city parks. Based on this information, the annual labor cost to the city (including

salaries and benefits) to remove graffiti from parks equates to approximately \$80,000 annually.

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- Parks and Open Spaces employees spent over 1,627 hours between January 2001 and April 2002 (approximately 101 hours per month) repairing damages from vandalism at city parks.

Cause:

- Limited personnel.
- Limited enforcement of park rules and regulations.

Effect:

- Damage to city assets.
- Complaints from the public.

Recommendations:

1. The City Manager's Office and Detention and Enforcement should jointly evaluate the adequacy of the coverage of city parks by the City Marshal's Office and additional measures that could be taken to increase the security presence in the parks. Consideration should be given to outsourcing some park security functions and increased use of volunteers.
2. The City Manager's Office and Detention and Enforcement should create a formal city park security plan.
3. Parks and Open Spaces management should ensure park signage includes easily identifiable phone numbers to call to report park vandalism and graffiti.

3. PARK SIGNAGE

Criteria:

- Signs at city parks should be clear, comprehensive, and consistent.
- Signs at city parks should clearly outline park rules and regulations to encourage public adherence to park rules and allow enforcement of the rules when needed.
- Signs at city parks should provide directional information for the public.

Condition:

- Proper signage outlining park rules and the repercussions of violating these rules does not exist at all city parks.
- Existing signage is not consistent between parks.
- City Marshals do not consider the park signage to be sufficient to support them in enforcing park rules and successfully prosecuting offenders. According to the City Marshal's Office, juvenile court cases have been lost due to deficient park rules signage.

Cause:

- Inadequate evaluation of required verbiage on park signage.
- Vandalism to existing signage.

Effect:

- Public not fully informed of park rules and repercussions for violations of rules.
- Enforcement limitations.

Recommendation:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management, in conjunction with the City Manager's Office, the City Attorney's Office, Leisure Services, and the City Marshal's Office, should evaluate existing park signage and make changes as necessary to:
 - Bring greater consistency of signage between parks and park venues;
 - Improve the enforceability of park rules and regulations; and
 - Provide increased information to the public.

4. FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT SECURITY

Criteria: City facilities and assets should be secure.

Condition:

Security Policies

- Divisional security policies and procedures are not fully documented.

East Yard

- Parks' operational headquarters building and supply sheds are located at the City's East Service Yard located at East Bonanza and Mojave. Many of the Division's vehicles and equipment trailers are parked at the East Service Yard nightly.
- The East Service Yard is unsecured and accessible by the public. The security gate at the front entrance to the East Service Yard has been inoperable since September 2000.
- A fueling station exists at the East Service Yard and could be a potential hazard with the Yard being unsecured.
- Multiple thefts of equipment have occurred at the East Service Yard over the past two years.
- During an after-hours visit to the East Service Yard, we identified thirteen of forty-seven (28%) Parks vehicles that had been left unlocked. Vehicle keys had been left in the ignition of one unlocked vehicle. Two city identification badges and a city radio were found in other unlocked vehicles. Unlocked tool boxes and various unsecured tools and supplies were also identified.
- The door hinges on the storage shed at the East Service Yard are external to the shed and could easily be removed.



Keys Found in Ignition of Unlocked Vehicle

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Satellite Yard

- In addition to its East Service Yard location, Parks and Open Spaces has a building at the City's Satellite Yard located near Vegas Drive and Decatur. During a visit to this facility, we found the building open with no city employees present. The building is open for access by Parks and Open Spaces employees during the day. Unused vehicle keys and radios were accessible and a supplies closet was open.
- While the Satellite Yard is secured at night with a locked gate, the chain-link fence surrounding the Yard is damaged and could easily be accessed by an intruder.



Vehicle Keys and Radios at Satellite Yard

Control of Keys

- The City's key system for its facilities is over 30 years old and of a type commonly used. Detention and Enforcement cannot account for all of the keys that have been issued over the years and according to city staff, there are non-city employees that have copies of city keys.
- When a key is lost, an employee pays a \$10 fee and upon management approval is issued another key. No evaluation of the impact of a lost key is typically completed and locks are usually not changed.

Effect:

- City assets are at risk of theft and vandalism.

Cause:

- Parks and Open Spaces and Facilities Management have not adequately addressed security issues at city facilities.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should more fully document its security policies.
2. Parks and Open Spaces management (in conjunction with Facilities Management and Detention and Enforcement where applicable) should immediately evaluate and address the following security issues:
 - Unsecured entrances to the East Service Yard.
 - Unsecured vehicles, vehicle keys, identification badges, radios, tools and supplies.
 - Unsecured Satellite Yard building.
 - Damaged Satellite Yard fencing.
 - External hinges on supply shed.
3. The City Manager's Office in conjunction with Detention and Enforcement should evaluate and document the current status of controls of keys at the City and develop a plan to address

weaknesses in the controls to ensure proper security of city facilities. This evaluation should include a review of the following areas:

- Distribution of keys
- Effectiveness of marking keys “Do not duplicate”
- Handling of terminated employees
- Handling of transferred employees who no longer need keys
- Process for returning keys
- Penalty for not returning keys
- Penalty for losing keys
- Policy on when locks should be changed or recored when keys are lost, stolen, or misplaced.

5. MAINTENANCE TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Criteria:

- Employees should be accountable for tools and use of supplies.
- Tools and supplies should be properly secured.

Condition:

- Parks and Open Spaces spent over \$592,000 in maintenance tools and supplies during fiscal year 2002.
- Parks and Open Spaces employees purchase maintenance tools and supplies both from vendors under contract with the City and from retailers. Purchase discounts are only available from vendors under contract with the City.
- Maintenance tools and supplies used by Parks and Open Spaces employees are stored in storage sheds at the two service yards, in storage facilities at city parks, and on city vehicles.
- Limited supply storage space is available at the service yards and there is a need for increased covered areas for storage of fertilizer and pipes.
- There is currently no formal maintenance tools and supplies tracking system.
- Parks and Open Spaces employees periodically purchase items from retailers at retail price that are available at a discount from vendors under contract with the City. While lists of the City’s annual contracts with vendors are available, the parts available under these contracts are not easily identifiable, especially if the contract was entered into by another city division/department.



Maintenance Supplies on a Parks Vehicle

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Cause:

- Lack of a formal tools and supplies tracking system.
- Limited storage space.
- Employees are sometimes unaware of supplies covered under annual contracts.

Effect:

- Lack of accountability for tools and use of supplies by employees.
- Opportunities for theft of tools and supplies.
- Potential for lost purchase discounts.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should establish at a minimum a formal tracking system for higher cost maintenance tools and supplies.
2. Parks and Open Spaces management should evaluate and document what additional supply storage space is needed for storing supplies.
3. Parks and Open Spaces management in conjunction with Purchasing should evaluate methods by which the individual parts available in annual contracts can be more easily referenced by employees.

6. PROPERTY DAMAGE REPORTING

Criteria:

- The City's Risk Management Loss Prevention Manual states the following:

The recovery for city property damaged by a third party is of utmost importance for reducing expenses of the department for repairs or replacement of the damages. Therefore, all departments are responsible for reporting all city property damaged by a third party to the Insurance Services Division as soon as damage is discovered (The City of Las Vegas Risk Management Loss Prevention Manual, Chapter V, Section IIA).

Condition:

- City departments are responsible for reporting damage to or losses of city property to Insurance Services for evaluation and cost recovery from the City's insurance reserve. When possible, efforts are made to recover costs of damages from third parties.
- Despite numerous incidents of vandalism and graffiti during the year, Parks filed only three damage reports and three stolen equipment reports totaling \$3,970 with Insurance Services during fiscal year 2002.
- The City's insurance fund reimbursed Parks and Open Spaces for these costs.
- No formal guidance exists for Parks and Open Spaces employees as to when a damage or loss report must be filed with Insurance Services.

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- The differentiation between damage repair work and maintenance work is not clearly defined.

Cause:

- Lack of formal guidelines for Parks employees for submission of property damage reports.
- Paperwork considered burdensome.

Effect:

- Parks and Open Spaces not recovering all costs associated with property damages.
- Information tracked by Insurance Services is incomplete.

Recommendation:

1. Parks and Open Spaces Management should establish formal guidelines regarding what property damage at city parks should be reported to Insurance Services. For example, thresholds could be established based on hours or costs incurred.

7. SAFETY

Criteria:

- Active involvement by management in promoting safety and providing safety training can help increase safety awareness and reduce injuries among employees.

Condition:

- In 2001, Parks and Open Spaces had a total of 262 lost workdays and 250 restricted workdays as a result of employee injuries.
- The Division established a safety committee in January 2002 and subsequently held meetings in February and March. Limited documentation summarizing the results of these meetings was available. No safety committee meetings have been held subsequent to March and no written communication of safety issues to employees from the safety committee was identified.

Cause:

- Safety committee not fully functioning.

Effect:

- Potential for unresolved safety issues.
- Potential for employee injuries.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should determine how to most effectively address safety issues and safety training in its division and establish a safety awareness program.

2. Parks and Open Spaces management should promote safety awareness within the Division through both written and verbal correspondence with employees.
3. Parks and Open Spaces management should establish divisional safety goals and an action plan to reduce the division's lost and restricted workdays resulting from employee injuries.

8. REVIEW OF DESIGN STANDARDS AND PARK DESIGNS

Criteria:

- The establishment of park design standards can reduce planning, construction and maintenance costs.
- The review of park designs by all concerned parties helps ensure the needs of these parties are properly addressed.

Condition:

- The Architectural Services Division of Public Works oversees the design and building of city parks.
- Architectural Services has begun creating design standards that impact city parks. These standards have been placed on the City's intranet.
- Parks and Open Spaces management has not yet formally reviewed and commented on the design standards that impact city parks.
- Parks and Open Spaces management are given opportunities by Architectural Services to review and provide input on the blueprints of city parks during their design. This input is typically provided through markings and notations directly on the blueprints.
- Parks and Open Spaces management does not maintain a record of input provided to Architectural Services to ensure their input is adequately addressed.
- Parks and Open Spaces management do not always provide timely input on park designs.



Cause:

- Review of park designs and design standards not given adequate attention.
- Lack of access to blueprint copy machine to copy input noted on blueprints.

Effect:

- Needs of Parks and Open Spaces may not be adequately addressed in design standards and park designs.
- Potential for retrofits and increased maintenance costs.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should review design standards that impact city parks and provide input to Architectural Services.
2. Parks and Open Spaces management should timely review and provide input on park designs and track their input to ensure that their issues are adequately addressed prior to the awarding of park construction contracts.

9. PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Criteria:

- Customer issues and complaints should be properly tracked and addressed in a timely manner.

Condition:

- Parks office personnel receive phone calls from the public and other city departments regarding problems, complaints, and issues at city parks.
- No formal log of complaints and their disposition or status is maintained by the office personnel.
- Work orders are often prepared as a result of these calls and are forwarded to the appropriate supervisors for resolution.

Cause:

- Management has not required the maintenance of a customer complaint log.

Effect:

- Limited management data on complaints and resolution.
- Potential for untimely resolution of issues.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should evaluate additional measures that can be taken to improve and formalize the tracking and monitoring of customer issues and complaints.
2. Once a formalized tracking program is established, Parks and Open Spaces management should create summary reports and distribute them to concerned parties.

10. PARK RESERVATIONS

Criteria:

- Guidelines regarding the reservable areas of parks should be clearly defined.
- Reservable areas of parks should be clearly identified.
- Fees for services should continually be evaluated as to their adequacy in recovering costs.

Condition:

Reservable Areas

- The City has designated certain park picnic shelters and recreation areas (i.e., horseshoe pits, volleyball pits) as reservable by the public for personal use or for special events.
- Reservations can be made in person for a fee through the Department of Leisure Services.
- The cleaning of reserved areas and event areas prior to their use is a high priority for Parks and Open Spaces personnel. These areas are given special attention beyond the routine cleaning and maintenance.
- Parks and Open Spaces management receive various reports from Leisure Services of reservations, sporting events, cultural events, and special events at parks. These reports are not optimally formatted for use by Parks and Open Spaces personnel as they are not consolidated.
- A comprehensive list of reservable picnic shelters and recreation areas for reference by the public is not available.
- Reservable picnic shelters are not adequately identified. Certain reservable picnic shelters are only identified by clear laminate boxes for placement of a reservation card.
- We observed a dispute between two groups at a city park over rights to personal use of a picnic shelter. The first group claimed that Leisure Services had told them that the shelter was non-reservable and could only be held for personal use if they were first on-site (which they were). The second group had paid a fee and obtained a permit from Leisure Services for use of the site. This incident had to be resolved by a City Marshall who indicated to us that similar incidents had previously occurred.



City Park Picnic Shelter

Fees

- Leisure Services establishes city park reservation fees and damage deposits.
- Reservation fees for personal use of city park venues are a flat fee rather than an hourly rate as are reservation fees for special events.
- Established reservation fees and damage deposits are minimal and may not adequately cover the costs associated with preparation and cleaning of an area.

Reserved Area Inspections

- A city marshal rather than a Parks and Open Spaces employee signs off on each rental contract/parks permit that the reserved area was inspected subsequent to its use.
- If a reserved area is left unclean or property is damaged, Leisure Services may deduct the clean-up cost from the responsible party's damage deposit.

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Cleaning Guidelines

- Guidelines for proper cleaning of a reserved area or a park subsequent to their use are not clearly defined for the public in the rental contract/park permit or in Special Event contracts.

Cause:

- Lack of coordination between city divisions.
- Inadequate identification of reservable areas.
- Adequacy of fees have not been adequately evaluated.
- Lack of formalized cleaning guidelines for the public.

Effect:

- Weekly reports not meeting needs of Parks and Open Spaces.
- Confusion by the public as to what park areas are reservable.
- Inadequate recovery of costs.
- Inefficient use of City Marshal's Office.
- Additional work for Parks and Open Spaces employees.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces and Leisure Services should jointly create a consolidated report of weekly park events, activities, and reservations that meets the needs of Parks and Open Spaces personnel.
2. Parks and Open Spaces and Leisure Services should jointly determine what park venues are reservable and develop a comprehensive listing of these venues for use internally and for reference by the public.
3. Parks and Open Spaces management should work with Leisure Services in designing improved signage for reservable picnic shelters and recreational areas that clearly identify the reservable area and how to reserve the area.
4. Leisure Services management should establish a policy to not reserve out non-reservable areas of parks. If exceptions are made, proper public notice should be made well in advance of the event for which the exception was made.
5. Leisure Services management should evaluate and document additional methods by which park facilities could be reserved (i.e., phone, internet).
6. Leisure Services in conjunction with Parks and Open Spaces should evaluate and document the adequacy of the current park reservation fees and damage deposits. Consideration should be given to charging the public a cleaning fee if they desire a special cleaning of the area prior to its use.
7. Parks and Open Spaces personnel (rather than city marshals) in conjunction with their regular cleaning and maintenance duties should inspect reserved areas and sign-off on the rental contract/park permit. Parks and Open Spaces should then make the determination as to whether a portion or all of the damage deposit should be withheld.
8. Parks and Open Spaces management should develop guidelines for the proper cleaning of city parks and reservable park facilities for the public. These guidelines should be included in the park rental contract/park permit and in Special Event contracts and used as a measure in determining whether to refund a damage deposit.

11. PARK AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Criteria:

- A well-organized volunteer program can be effective in identifying issues and reducing operational costs.

Condition:

- The Park Ambassador Program is a group of volunteers sponsored by the City's Senior Citizen Programs Division of Leisure Services. The Program is advertised primarily to senior citizens and information regarding the Program is found under the Senior Citizen Programs section of the City's web site.
- The Park Ambassadors currently have 30 volunteers (primarily senior citizens) and cover only 17 of the City's 51 parks.
- Responsibilities of Park Ambassadors include making sure parks are safe, promoting up and coming city programs, meeting and greeting the public who come to enjoy the parks, and developing bonds with regular park visitors.
- Park Ambassadors inspect assigned city parks with formal checklists and provide input at monthly meetings regarding issues at the parks.
- The Park Ambassadors attend monthly meetings where they submit the park checklists to Leisure Services staff with comments on park issues and conditions.
- A summary of the findings of the Park Ambassadors are submitted to the City's Safety Loss Control Officer and several city departments/divisions including Parks and Open Spaces and the City Marshal's Office.
- While feedback is requested by Leisure Services from city divisions/departments on the status of issues within the summary report, little feedback is given to the Park Ambassadors on the status of issues.
- The City Marshal's Office is the only department outside of Leisure Services that has a representative attend the monthly Park Ambassador meetings.
- Issues identified by the Park Ambassadors are not always addressed in a timely manner.
- While attending a Park Ambassador monthly meeting, we noted some frustration from the volunteers that the issues they had identified were not being addressed.



City Park Ambassadors

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Cause:

- Limited coverage of city parks.
- Lack of a formalized and mandatory issue follow-up program.
- Lack of representation at monthly meetings by Parks and Open Spaces.

Effect:

- Park issues may not be timely addressed.
- Frustration experienced by volunteers.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should formally respond monthly to the issues identified by the Park Ambassadors.
2. A representative from Parks and Open Spaces should attend the monthly Park Ambassador meetings.
3. Leisure Services should take measures to expand the number of volunteers in the Park Ambassador program to permit increased coverage of the city parks. Consideration should be given to increased involvement by non-senior citizens, civic organizations, and neighborhood associations.
4. Leisure Services in conjunction with the City Manager's Office should evaluate and document whether the Park Ambassador program would be better overseen by a division outside of the Senior Services division to further increase involvement by non-senior citizens.

12. ADA STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

Criteria:

- City parks should be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Condition:

- The ADA is a Federal civil rights law established in 1990 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities and outlines requirements to meet the goals of the ADA. Organizations that serve the public must:
 - modify policies and practices that discriminate against people with disabilities;
 - comply with accessible design standards when constructing or altering facilities;
 - remove barriers in existing facilities where readily achievable; and
 - provide auxiliary aids and services when needed to ensure effective communication with people who have hearing, vision, or speech impairments.
- Retrofitting of city parks to make them ADA compliant is completed by both Parks and Open Spaces and outside contractors contracted by Architectural Services.
- City parks are not all compliant with ADA requirements.

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- No master list of ADA retrofits needed at city parks and estimated costs exist beyond those projects that are using funds from the City's remaining ADA fund.
- No single person in Parks and Open Spaces has been designated to coordinate bringing city parks into compliance with ADA standards.
- Funding for ADA retrofits at city parks (as well as for other city facilities) was previously available through an ADA Fund established as a result of the enactment of the ADA legislation. However, the ADA fund is nearly all spent and no longer available for ADA retrofits at city parks not previously identified.
- Parks and Open Spaces must now request ADA retrofit funding in conjunction with the annual budget process.

Cause:

- Lack of formalized program to bring parks into compliance with ADA standards.

Effect:

- Potential civil penalties.
- Individuals with disabilities may be unable to fully use the city parks.

Recommendations:

1. Parks and Open Spaces should designate an individual to coordinate bringing all city parks into compliance with ADA standards.
2. Parks and Open Spaces should assist in the creation of a formal program for bringing city parks into compliance with ADA standards.

13. ALLOCATION OF MANPOWER

Criteria:

- Employee work hours should align with the needs of an organization.

Condition:

- City parks are most heavily used by the public during the weekends.
- The operational approach of Parks and Open Spaces management is to use most of its staff for routine park maintenance during the weekdays when the parks are less used by the public and limited staff during the weekends to clean reserved areas and prepare parks for special events. Weekend work is driven by scheduled events.
- Parks and Open Spaces only has four staff assigned to weekend shift (Friday through Monday, 10 hours each day). However, weekday staff who are willing to work overtime must continually be identified by management to work weekends as needed to supplement the weekend crew. During heavy-use weekends, Parks and Open Spaces has 12-15 staff on duty.



Litter at a City Park

- After working overtime over a weekend, weekday staff may be less productive and more inclined to take paid sick leave during the week.
- Weekend staff typically make only one visit to a single park each day. Improved cleanliness of parks (i.e., trash pickup, cleaning of restrooms) throughout the weekend would require additional visits at the parks throughout the day.
- Parks and Open Spaces incurred approximately \$95,000 in overtime during fiscal year 2002 and has

budgeted approximately \$127,000 for overtime during fiscal year 2003. Parks management estimates that at least 95% of this overtime is related to weekend work. This overtime will inevitably continue to increase as new parks are built.

Cause:

- Limited employee resources during hours of heaviest use of parks.
- Assignment of additional employees to weekend duty would reduce the number of staff available for routine maintenance during the week.

Effect:

- Greater potential for unclean park facilities during the weekends and complaints from the public.
- Increased operational costs with payment of overtime.
- Continual need for management to identify employees willing to work overtime.
- Potential for less productive employees during weekdays.

Recommendation:

1. Parks and Open Spaces management should evaluate and document alternative measures that could be taken to increase the effectiveness of its weekend operations. Management should consider the following:
 - Outsourcing of general cleaning functions such as general trash pickup and restroom cleaning at more heavily used parks.
 - Less concentrated efforts on the weekends in preparation for reservations and special events could create additional time for routine cleaning and maintenance.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSES TO AUDIT OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

1. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We will further develop and expand the policy & procedure manual and operations manual that we have. We will address and include those items and areas that have been recommended.

Timetable: 6 months.

2. PARK SECURITY

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

City Manager's Office

Management Plan of Action and Timetable: The City Manager's Office will continue to evaluate coverage at City parks in conjunction with various City departments. To this end, a Manager-led task force will be established which includes the City Attorney's Office, the Departments of Detention and Enforcement, Field Operations, Leisure Services, and others that are involved in parks usage and control. Discussions will include, but not be limited to operations, security needs, scheduling, budgetary constraints, alternative service provision, volunteerism and employment classification, and will proceed so as to be integrated into the FY 2003-2004 budget process.

Detention and Enforcement

Management Plan of Action: The department will, once again, include in its annual fiscal year budget requests, justification to hire additional officers. If approved, the new officers will provide increased presence throughout the City of Las Vegas' facilities, parks, and other properties.

To hire a sufficient force of security agents that might deter vandalism and graffiti would, at the very least, equal or surpass the expenses associated with covering the graffiti and repairing the damage caused by vandalism.

As long as the growth of personnel in the Deputy Marshal unit is proportional to the increase in the number of parks, other city facilities, population growth, and additional responsibilities, the Deputy City Marshal Unit will provide an optimum level of safety and security in the City of Las Vegas.

Timetable: Fiscal year 2002-2003

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

City Manager's Office

Management Plan of Action and Timetable: We agree with this recommendation and believe that such a plan is largely provided in the Field Services Policy and Procedures Manual. We would anticipate a review and possible revision of the plan as a product of the discussions identified in recommendation 2.1 referred to above.

Detention and Enforcement

Management Plan of Action: The Department of Detention & Enforcement, Field Services Policy & Procedures Manual, sections 1.90.005 through 1.90.009 details the patrol function of the Deputy City Marshal Unit. This portion of the manual provides the unit with a basic "park security plan" as indicated in the recommendation. Closer inspection of the patrol function policy and procedures indicates that some modification would bring further clarity and delineation of duties and responsibilities. This modification will be undertaken and, when done, will serve, in addition to the patrol function policy and procedures, as a "park security plan".

Timetable: Fiscal Year 2002-2003

RECOMMENDATION 2.3

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We are currently working on signage for updated rules & regulations; some is in rough draft form already. We will also work on language and signage for specialty situations, conditions, and locations. We will work with Detention and Enforcement for the most effective locations for sign placement.

Timetable: 3 months to finish language and gather all approvals. 2 months to bid and manufacture. 6 months to install in all parks.

3. PARK SIGNAGE

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

City Manager's Office

Management Plan of Action: We agree with this recommendation to provide consistency in parks signage leading to more effective enforcement and public outreach, and will accordingly include these discussions as topics under recommendation 2.1 referred to above.

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We are currently working on signage verbiage for updated rules & regulations. We are also working on language for specialty situations, conditions, and locations. We will work with Detention & Enforcement for the most effective locations for sign placement.

Timetable: It will take us 4 – 5 months to get the signs approved and manufactured; 6 months to install in all parks. Will be completed by September 30, 2003.

4. FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT SECURITY

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: As part of our policies & procedures and operations manual efforts we will more fully document our security policies.

Timetable: This would be in the same time frame of #1; 6 months.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: The entrances to the east yard are currently being addressed with the construction of a new south entrance and a scheduled perimeter block wall. The east entrance is scheduled to remain a chain link gate, but will be upgraded.

We have verbally instituted a weekly random inspection of vehicles by the field supervisors of those vehicles assigned to staff they are responsible for. Crew leaders have been directed to conduct their own inspections. We will formalize these inspections as we further develop our manuals and will create inspection documents.

The field supervisor at the Satellite Yard has been directed to leave both doors to the satellite office locked at all times. Random checks will be made to ensure compliance. We have met with the Manager of Fleet Services and as vehicles are scheduled for routine maintenance they will be inspected by Fleet Services staff for the non compliance items listed. Any findings will be reported to the Manager of Parks & Open Spaces for appropriate action.

We will inventory the perimeter fence at the satellite yard and will make the necessary repairs to make it as secure as possible. If another type of perimeter fence or wall is expected this would have to be a decision made by Department/City management and budgeted for.

Timetable:

The east entrance should be completed in 2 months.

The wall is scheduled to begin in November and could take up to 6 months.

Formalized written policy for vehicle inspections would be done in #1; 6 months.

The security of the satellite yard office has already been addressed.

We will complete the inspection and repair of the perimeter fence at the satellite yard in 1 month.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3

City Manager's Office

Management Plan of Action and Timetable: Over the past several years, significant strides have been made in the safety and security of keys produced and distributed by the City. Even with those strides, however, opportunities for further improvement and more consistent application exist. To that end, the City Manager's Office will work with Detention and Enforcement, Field Operations, Human Resources, and other stakeholders in this process to address weaknesses in controls identified by this audit.

Detention and Enforcement

Management Plan of Action: Replace the current 30 year old system with a Kaba Peaks High Security key system that utilizes keys and cores which are not available to others locksmiths or distributors. Also restrict the number of high level master keys to only those individuals who require access to designated work areas. These would include Deputy City Marshals, HVAC technicians, Facilities Management Supervisors, and the Locksmiths.

Timetable: This system would be integrated into the overall master key system with an estimated completion for converting all City of Las Vegas properties to the new high security system in five years.

Management Plan of Action: A new City Access Control and **Key** Policy has been written and is currently awaiting approval. This policy will address procedures for issuing, lost, stolen, returned/non-returned keys and penalties for employees who fail to return keys upon processing out of the City.

The Senior D&E Locksmith will meet with various department representatives (one assigned to each department) to solicit their help in enforcing the above mentioned City Access Control and Key Policy.

Timetable: Two months

5. MAINTENANCE TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

RECOMMENDATION 5.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: There is some concern that the dollar figures attributed to tools and supplies might not be truly reflective. Purchases of supplies and materials that are immediately used would not have the need nor requirement for tracking. We inventory very little materials and supplies. We do inventory small tools and equipment; but don't feel that it would be prudent to spend thousands of dollars to account for the same dollar amount in tools and equipment. We will formalize a policy and procedure to track tools and equipment with a value of over \$1,000. There is already a City system to track major purchases. We already have an informal manual system to track equipment and tools given to crew leaders.

Timetable: Same as #1; 6 months.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: The design for the new offices and storage at the west yard include what we feel will be adequate secured and protected space. As that facility is completed and crews are moved there we will evaluate what our storage needs will be at the east yard and will request budget funds to provide it. With the creation of the new storage area in the east yard we have sufficient secured storage.

Timetable: Move to the west could take up to 12 months.

RECOMMENDATION 5.3

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We will work with Purchasing to find a timely and accurate way for us to know what annual purchase orders are current and applicable materials or services would be available for our use. We would then provide this information to our field personnel and accordingly limit our use of P cards to purchase emergency and/or non purchase order available commodities.

Timetable: 3 months.

6. PROPERTY DAMAGE REPORTING

RECOMMENDATION 6.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: The Parks & Open Spaces Division will explore the possibility and feasibility of establishing guidelines for reporting property damage; based on square footage of damage, estimated cost of repair, vulgarity or ethnic inappropriateness, and/or repetitive acts at one location. We are currently reporting all accident damage and stolen items.

Timetable: We will have this done by April 30, 2003.

7. SAFETY

RECOMMENDATION 7.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We feel the most effective way to address safety issues is to continue to make it the highest of priorities in the Division. It will continue to be addressed in all division meetings. Our fledgling safety committee will be refined, in make up and scope, and will be a composite part of our safety awareness efforts. New staff will receive documented monthly training on the use of tools and materials they will use and operate. As staff are given the opportunity to expand their service abilities they will be trained in the use of any associated equipment. We will continue to participate in the City sponsored safety programs and training.

Timetable: New staff training to begin in 30 days, the internal safety committee to be refined in the next 30 – 60 days, and the rest will be on going.

RECOMMENDATION 7.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: Safety will continue to be discussed and emphasized in every division meeting. We will increase the use of posters and notices to emphasize safety to the staff. This will be an administrative assignment.

Timetable: It's going on now; we'll increase our activity.

RECOMMENDATION 7.3

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: Our safety goals will be 1) the reduction of the cost of vehicle damage repair as a ratio to total maintained acres by 10% and 2) the reduction of lost man hours as a ratio to total maintained acres by 10%. The Department of Field Operations is currently recruiting for a Safety Officer and this individual will assist in division staff training as a means to achieve these goals.

Timetable: We will begin immediately.

8. REVIEW OF DESIGN STANDARDS AND PARK DESIGNS

RECOMMENDATIONS 8.1 and 8.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: The Parks & Open Spaces Division will work with the Office of Architectural Services to incorporate a Parks signature line on all park construction drawings and a process whereby review comments will be submitted in a timely manner to OAS and all comments will remain on file.

Timetable: Will be completed by January 1, 2003.

9. PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

RECOMMENDATION 9.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We will work closely with those developing the HANSEN information system to be a part of the complaint monitoring component. Until it is functional, we will implement a hand driven system using a standardized form. We will make a monthly reporting form a part of our temporary and permanent systems. This will be in addition to the City's C.A.R. system.

Timetable: Unknown timeline on the implementation of the HANSEN component. We will have the hand driven system in place by December 1, 2002.

RECOMMENDATION 9.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We will incorporate monthly reporting capabilities in each complaint tracking system.

Timetable: The hand driven system will be in place by December 1, 2002.

10. PARK RESERVATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 10.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: Prior conversations with Leisure Services have indicated that their new reservation system, CLASS, does not allow much deviation from the style of report that we are getting now. They have also indicated that they do not have staff time to convert the reports into another format that would be much more useable for us. Would appear that we will have to convert the reservation information into a format that will increase our efficiency in performing our tasks.

Timetable: As needed.

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: Leisure Services and Parks and Open Spaces will meet to look at the feasibility of developing a consolidated report of weekly park events, activities, and reservations that meets the needs of Parks and Open Spaces personnel.

Timetable: 3 – 4 months.

RECOMMENDATION 10.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We will coordinate with the Department of Leisure Services to create a listing of all reservable sites; to include picnic sites, sports, and special events.

Timetable: To be completed by December 1, 2002.

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: There is a current listing of park venues that have been jointly agreed upon between Leisure Services and Parks and Open Spaces. Leisure Services and Parks and Open Spaces will meet periodically to review this listing to ensure it is updated and accurate.

Timetable: Ongoing (as City Parks are continually being built).

RECOMMENDATION 10.3

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: Since we are responsible for the preparation of these sites and responsible for the posting of the reservations we will design the signage and language and its installation.

Timetable: Start in 90 - 120 days and it will be on going. Signs will have to be manufactured first.

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: Leisure Services and Parks and Open Spaces will work collaboratively with the Public Works Department to assist in the design and construction of improved signage for reservable picnic shelters.

Timetable: Four – Six months.

RECOMMENDATION 10.4

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: Leisure Services management feels it is not necessary to develop a policy “to not reserve out non-reservable areas of parks.” Because Leisure Services is in the business of providing a service to the community, establishing such a policy would diminish our responsibility to provide exceptional customer service. Leisure Services has a clearly defined list of reservable and non-reservable parks outlined in the Park Reservation Brochure. Non-reservable parks are reserved on rare occasions and are approved by management on a case-by-case basis. When non-reservable parks are in fact reserved, Parks and Open Spaces personnel are notified well in advance.

Timetable: Completed

RECOMMENDATION 10.5

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: Although Leisure Services is working with the Information Technology Department to explore different mediums for reserving parks, reserving a park over the phone is not currently viable because of the following:

- Patrons are required to provide payment at time of reservation
- Leisure Services is not currently set up to receive credit card information telephonically due to the numerous variables attached to park reservations, i.e. air jumpers, disc jockey, generators, etc.

Upon completion of the install of the new recreation software “CLASS”, customers will have the ability to make phone and internet reservations.

Timetable: Four – Six months.

RECOMMENDATION 10.6

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: The Department of Leisure Services creates the fee structures and schedules that are reviewed and approved by Council. Parks will assist Leisure in their development of appropriate fees; giving input to the costs associated with preparation and cleaning of reservable sites.

Timetable: Immediate contact will be made to establish our availability.

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: A benchmarking project was recently conducted with other municipalities within the Southern Nevada area. All fees and charges are currently comparable to selected entities.

Leisure Services does not agree with charging citizens an additional public cleaning fee because it is very rare to receive such a request. This is attributable to the fine job that the Park and Open Spaces personnel do in cleaning the parks each and every day. Please note that requests for special cleaning normally come for reservation requests from the Office of the Mayor and Council.

Regarding cleanliness of a reserved park area after the patron has utilized the park, item #3 of the Park Reservation Brochure clearly outlines the procedures if a park area is determined to be left unclean or damaged.

Timetable: Completed

RECOMMENDATION 10.7

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: There is no way that our staff can be at every reservation site when that reservation is completed. We would not see the area until the following morning and the argument could be made by the reserver that it was clean when they left. We currently notify Leisure Services when we observe that a site requires more than a normal maintenance effort to clean it. Leisure then deals with the deposit situation.

Timetable:

RECOMMENDATION 10.8

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: Parks will establish normal cleaning and preparation standards; with time frames, and will create standards for what is expected of the public in cleaning up after a reservation.

Timetable: Will complete by January 1, 2003.

11. PARK AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION 11.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We do formally respond to the issues identified by the park ambassadors. What will need to be addressed is the content of the reporting and the unnecessary repetition of issues. When we respond to an issue they need to drop it off the report ... even if it's not what they want to hear. Too many of their issues are either cosmetic and can only be done when we have time or what they want done is beyond our capabilities.

Timetable: We are currently responding and will incorporate more detail in our responses.

RECOMMENDATION 11.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: Agree. I will get with Stephanie and have her notify me of meetings.

Timetable: Immediate.

RECOMMENDATION 11.3

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: The Senior Citizen Programs Division will develop a task force to study the Senior Park Ambassador Program's coverage of city parks and the increased involvement of non-senior and outside groups.

Timetable: Complete study by February, 2003.

RECOMMENDATION 11.4

Leisure Services

Management Plan of Action: The above-mentioned Senior Citizen Programs Division task force will work with the Parks Division and City Manager's Office to evaluate the Senior Park Ambassador Program's increased involvement of non-senior citizens and program supervision.

Timetable: Complete evaluation and make recommendation by February, 2003.

12. ADA STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

RECOMMENDATION 12.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We will do that. The two people assigned will be John Black and Gary Bingham. We will coordinate with whomever the City designates as having lead authority. We would suggest Architectural Services.

Timetable: Immediate.

RECOMMENDATION 12.2

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: The Parks Maintenance Division should not have the primary responsibility for developing programming that will bring City parks into ADA compliance. This function will require the development of project plans and drawings and OAS is much more qualified to do this. We must, and will be, an integral part of any and all formal programming.

Timetable: Immediate

13. ALLOCATION OF MANPOWER

RECOMMENDATION 13.1

Parks and Open Spaces

Management Plan of Action: We continue to research alternative approaches to providing week- end, picnic reservation and special event coverage. One possibility we are exploring is the use of the annual building maintenance contract that Facilities Management has for the cleaning of restrooms at designated high use parks during the peak use seasons. We also continue to explore the possible use of community service workers; this will require that the courts be able to guarantee that sentences will be specific and mandatory.

There is no way that on our own we can implement less maintenance effort to picnic and special events. Not at all sure this would ever be politically supported. We will continue to maximize the use of overtime to address these needs with the on-going hope that some of the revenues derived from the reservations and events can be dedicated to additional staff. We will continue to develop work schedules that will maximize our efforts in these specialty maintenance requirements.

Timetable: On going.